

The Christmas Heavens.

THE splendor of the sky on Christmas night is due to the presence of the most brilliant group of constellations that can be assembled, including Orion, Taurus (with the Pleiades), Gemini, Canis Major (with Sirius), Auriga, Lepus, Andromeda and Perseus.

Each Minute Contains Sixty Seconds—and an Opportunity



Magazine Page



This Day in History.

THIS is the anniversary of the capture of the citadel of Antwerp by a French army under General Gerard in 1832. The citadel had been held for two years, during the Belgian revolution, by the Dutch General Chasse. Following the revolution Antwerp grew rapidly.

The Heart Breaker

Mildred Welcomes Chance to Play Tom and Arthur Against Each Other at Home Dinner Party.

CHAPTER XXIV.
(Copyright, 1918, Star Company.)

I was almost down when Honora Brent fell asleep.

What a relief! The thought that she was about to do what her conscience dictated. This helped extract the sting of the memory of Arthur's knowledge of her deception. For the moment it made her proposed plan of action seem easy.

For, so far as she was concerned, the knowledge that one has sacrificed one's own desires and hopes for the welfare of a loved one does bring some reward in a comfortable consciousness of duty performed.

But this comfortable assurance does not always last. In many cases it is reinforced by the grateful appreciation of the person for whom one has made a sacrifice. And the person in question sometimes ignores the fact that any special favor has been done for her.

So when Honora awoke on the morning following the automobile accident, determined to bear cheerfully what had happened and must happen—because it was for Milly's happiness that she would do this—her enthusiasm received a cold douche.

For Milly was not in a good humor. She was annoyed at being awakened a few minutes earlier than was absolutely necessary.

"You know perfectly well that I can't leave the house at a half hour, Honora," she grumbled. "Then why call me thirty-five minutes before breakfast?"

"You forget that Mrs. Higgins is not here," Honora said. "And that we ought to be down very promptly to see that Katie has everything ready on time. Mrs. Higgins always does that."

"Well, there is no need of it," Milly declared, throwing herself back on her pillow. "And, anyway, you will be dressed in time to see to that. There is certainly no need of both of us going downstairs to see to it."

Honora turned back to her bureau and finished adjusting her collar.

"You would best get up, dear," she said after awhile.

"All right!" Mildred yawned and sat on the edge of the bed swinging one pink foot back and forth.

"Don't you hate your job at this hour of the morning? It's all very well to feel that you are making good money, but it's a nuisance to have to do it."

"You won't make much money today if you don't get up," Honora replied tartly.

"Don't be cross!" Mildred snapped. "There—I knew I would say something to vex you if I got up. And now I've done it!"

"It really wasn't necessary to say it, you know," Honora remarked. "You do not always say something to vex me."

Mildred yawned again. At the sound Honora felt as if she must

stamp her own feet in nervousness. What wouldn't Milly get up and dress!

"I'm awfully sleepy this morning," the younger girl announced. "I guess that ride last night tired me a bit. But it was exciting, wasn't it?"

"It certainly was," was the dry admission.

"I suppose you were rather

frightened, too," Mildred commented.

"I was horribly frightened," Honora said curtly. "I did not know but what you were killed."

"Well, I wasn't," she said, the other observed lightly.

Then, throwing her wrapper about her, she strolled away to the bathroom to take her morning shower.

Honora stood still and listened to the sound of the girl's voice humming a gay little tune in accompaniment to the splash of the water in the tub. Mildred was not more than a child in her emotions, she reflected. Yet it was for her that her sister must suffer.

Then she reproved herself sharply. Surely she, Honora, deserved no credit in hurrying that which might occur in the course of time anyway. She had put her hand to the plow. She must not look back.

Mixed Dinner Crowd.

At breakfast she made a suggestion that had grown out of this determination.

"Mildred," she ventured, "wouldn't you like to have somebody here to dinner tomorrow (Saturday) night?"

Mildred looked up interested.

"Who?"

"Why," with an effort to speak differently, "perhaps we might ask Arthur to come in. And perhaps I might ask Miss Pearson—Mr. Pearson's sister, you know—to come, too—to play with me while you and Arthur are amusing each other," she added with a smile.

Mildred smiled faintly, then asked, "Why have Miss Pearson especially?"

"Only because she is rather middle-aged—and pleasant—and it might seem more conventional than for you and me to entertain alone," Honora explained. "Mrs. Higgins will hardly return before Monday."

"I'd rather not have Miss Pearson," Mildred objected.

A happy thought occurred to Honora. "Why not let us ask Mr. and Mrs. Bruce instead? We will be amply chaperoned and we can omit Miss Pearson."

Mildred hesitated. "That doesn't sound so very hilarious," she began. Then, with one of her characteristic changes of mood—"But I don't care! Yes, let's have them. Then they will see how well I can behave. And, since we are going to have the elderly Bruces here, let's add a sixth to the party. I'll invite Tom Chandler. Mrs. Higgins doesn't like him, so the time to have him is when she's out of the way!"

"Oh, my dear," Honora protested, "Tom is so—"

But Milly interrupted her. "Tom will behave all right with two elderly people looking on," she laughed. "He's certainly a gentleman, and I believe we will have a very jolly time. I say, with a mischievous grin. "That's some combination, isn't it? And such an opportunity to play Tom and Arthur off against each other. Just watch me!"

(To Be Continued.)

A Supposition.

The orderly officer was on his usual round. "Any complaints?" His voice sounded above the din of knives and forks.

"Yes, sir," answered a healthy-looking representative of the Tommy Atkins tribe. "This ere blinkin' joint's raw!"

"Look here, my man," said the officer, after due examination, which proved the complaint to be justified. "Do you know that Captain Webb trained on raw beef in order to swim the Channel?"

"Oh," said Tommy Atkins. "I thought as 'ow we was goin' across in boats!"

By Virginia Terhune Van de Water

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(To Be Continued.)

Motor Coat and Smart Gown

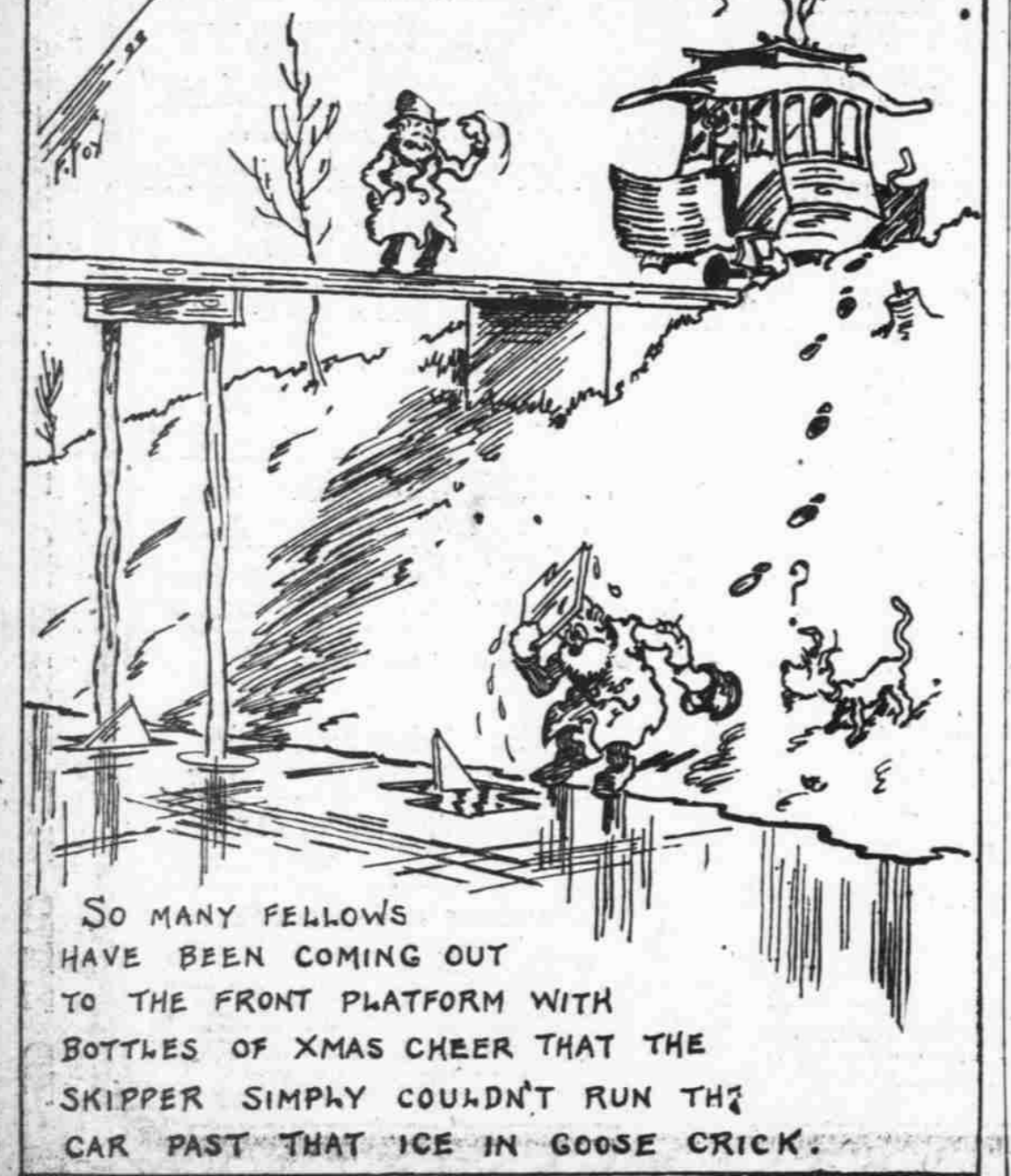


Copyright Western Newspaper Union.

This smart motor coat of exceptional design is made of chamolite cloth, cut extra military and lined also with chamolite. Raccoon collar and cuffs add greatly to general effect.

The Toonerville Trolley That Meets All the Trains

By FONTAINE FOX.



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What Can Older Women Do?

By Eleanor Gilbert.

ABOUT the most pathetic of all pleas for advice is the one that comes from the woman of forty or thereabouts.

"What can I do? I am over forty, but I must earn my own living. I am strong and willing, yet because of a few gray hairs I find it next to impossible to secure a suitable position."

Even more pathetic is the woman who has some physical disqualification in addition to the handicap of years. It may be a defect of sight or hearing or other bodily ills. It is true that there is a prejudice, more or less stupid, against employing older women for new jobs. That fact must be faced.

Sometimes it comes from the business man, who is frank to admit that he prefers younger women about. A rather unique reason was given by one minor executive, who said he couldn't bear to see an older man working around for him, attending his errands and so forth. Moreover, he felt too sensitive about offering a dignified older woman the small salary which a position suitable for her paid, and which would be perfectly satisfactory to a young girl.

I find, too, that in places where large numbers of women are employed there is occasionally much friction between the young element and the older woman. The young women are self-sufficient and callous; the older women are sometimes too critical, or take to boring their co-workers with accounts of their past glories or present ailments.

That sums up the case against the older woman in business as common reports go.

But, when you consider her possible merits, they more than counterbalance possible handicaps. I am firmly convinced that not only is there ample opportunity for the older woman in business, but in many cases the woman of mature years is likely to be far more efficient than the young girl. Of course, if she has training for the special kind of work in business, her task is simplified. But even for the untrained woman there is opportunity in abundance.

In the office she can sometimes be developed into a good general manager of a department. A dignified mature woman is the best kind of representative in the reception room, or in charge of the rest room, or library, if the organization is big enough to have one of its own. I believe there should be more elderly women employed in retail selling. These older women are patient and painstaking and courteous.

Youth gets impatient and sometimes discourteous when a customer fusses over the buying of dozens of tiny items, where the older woman does not. I think the older woman is especially adaptable to shoe selling. Buying shoes is usually a fussy job but an important one. The young saleswoman is eager to get the sale finished quickly, and usually influences the hesitating customer to a quick choice of shoes that look good. The older woman is wiser. She usually knows what shoe discomfort is, and she is more likely to be careful to advise her customer in the choice of comfortable shoes that are more than good looking—and she doesn't mind fussing about it either.

I think, too, that this elderly, dignified woman should do well in the selling of household articles—utensils, plain linens and even groceries. She lacks experience in the use of these things and readily wins the confidence of less informed customers. I should think that babies' wear would also be her province. But with a little effort any woman of sound physique and cheerfulness, regardless of age, should be able to place herself.

By Value.

At a dinner given by a millionaire the host showed his bad taste and lack of manners, as the dinner progressed, by telling his guests what the more expensive dishes had cost. He dwelt especially on the expense of some large and beautiful grapes, each bunch a foot long, each grape bigger than a plum. He told, down to a penny, what he had calculated that the grapes had cost him apiece. The guests looked annoyed. They ate the expensive grapes cheerfully; but one, smiling, held out his plate and said, "Would you mind cutting me off about two dollars' worth more, please."

A Benefactor in Disguise.

In a gathering of doctors a discussion arose about the conduct of a fellow-doctor, who always had afternoon tea served to patients who called between two and five. Some of the younger doctors were indignant and asked if the next thing would be free lunch counters in the surgery. But the oldest doctor present smiled cheerfully. "Don't worry about him. Any man who encourages the public to eat or drink between meals is, consciously or unconsciously, a benefactor to our profession!" he said.

The Cub-Footed Man

A NEW SPY SERIAL BY VALENTINE WILLIAMS

Desmond Finds Himself Deep in Meshes of Prussian Discipline. Dines With Von Boden.

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)

Desmond Oskrowd, British army officer, goes to Germany in search of his brother, Francis, a member of the British secret service. At a small frontier town, he meets a German Government agent, drops dead in his room. Desmond appropriates the agent's papers and assumes his identity. He reaches Berlin without incident and is conducted into the presence of General Von Boden, a side of the Kaiser.

It was a revolting spectacle, but it did not make the least impression on the son, who, putting down his cap and great-coat and disengaging his sword, led me into a kind of study. "These orderlies are such thickheads!" he said.

"Rudolf Radt!" a hoarse, strident voice screamed from the hall. The lieutenant ran out.

"You've got to take the fellow to Berlin tonight. The message was here all the time—that autocrat Heinrich forgot it. And we've got to keep the fellow here till then! An outrage, having the house used as a barracks for a rascally detective!" Thus much I heard, as the door had been left open. Then it closed and I heard no more.

As I had heard this much, there was a certain irony in the invitation to dinner subsequently conveyed to me by the young Uhlan. There was nothing for it but to accept. I knew I was caught deep in the meshes of Prussian discipline, every one had his orders and blindfolded them out, from the garulous Major on the frontier to the preposterous "Exzellenz," this imperial aide-de-camp of Potsdam. I was already a tiny cog in a great machine. I should have to revolve or be crushed.

His Excellency left me in no doubt on this point. When I was ushered into his study, after a much-needed shave, he received me standing, and said point-blank: "Your orders are to stay here until 10 o'clock tonight, when you will be taken to Berlin by Lieutenant Count von Boden. I don't know you. I don't know your business, but I have resolved certain orders concerning you which I intend to carry out. For that reason you will dine with us here. After you have seen the person to whom you are to be taken tonight, Lieutenant Count von Boden will accompany you to the railway station at Spandau, where a special train will be in readiness in which he will conduct you back to the frontier. I wish you clearly to understand that the lieutenant is responsible for seeing these orders carried out, and will see all means to that end. Have I made myself clear?"

The old man's manner was indescribably threatening.

"This is the machine we are out to smash," I had said to myself when I saw him availing his servant in the hall and I repeated the phrase to myself now. But to the general I said: "Perfectly, Your Excellency."

"Then let us go to dinner," said the general.

It was a nightmare meal. A faded and shrunken fustian, to whom I was introduced—some kind of relative who kept house for the general, I supposed—was the only other person present. She never opened her lips save, with eyes glazed with terror, to give some whispered instruction to the orderly when the general's food or wine. We dined in a depressing room with dingy brown wall-paper decorated with dusty stage antlers, an enormous green-tinted globe dominating everything. The general and his son sat solidly through the evening before me, the lady pecked furtively at her plate. As for myself I could not eat for sheer fright. Every nerve in my body was vibrating at the thought of the evening before me. If I could not avoid the interview, I was resolutely determined to give Master von Boden the slip rather than return to the frontier camp-hands. I had not braved all these perils to be packed off home without, at least, making an attempt to find Francis. Besides, I meant to get to the other half of that document.

There was some quite excellent Rhine wine, and I drank plenty of it. So did the general, with the result that, after the evening meal, I found to my surprise, were nervous and bitter opponents of Hindenburg, as I have since learned most of the old school of the Prussian army. They spoke of the Kaiser's "weakness" thoughts seemed to be centered on himself as the arch-enemy. They spoke of their faith in Falkenhayn and Mackensen. They had no words strong enough in their denunciation of Hindenburg, whom they always referred to as "the Brunkard" or "der Saufker." Now were they spared of criticism or what they called the Kaiser's "weakness" in letting him rise to power.

The humming of a car outside broke up our gathering. Remembering that I was due at the railway station before this great military luminary, I thanked the general with due servility for his hospitality. Then the count and I went out to the car and presently drove forth into the night.

We entered Berlin from the west, as it seemed to me, but then struck off in a southerly direction and were off in the commercial quarter of the city. Then I caught a glimpse of lamps reflected in water, and the next moment the car had stopped on a bridge over a canal or river. My companion sprang out and hurried me to a small gate in an iron railing enclosing a vast edifice looming black in the night, while the car moved off into the darkness.

The gate was open. Half a dozen yards from it was a small, slender tower with a pointed roof jutting out from the corner of the building. In the tower was a door which yielded easily to my companion's vigorous push as a clock somewhere within the building beat a double stroke of twelve.

The door led into a little vestibule brilliantly lit with electric light. There a man was waiting, a fine, upstanding bearded fellow in a kind of green hunting costume.

"So, Payer!" said the young Uhlan. "Here is the gentleman, I shall be at the west entrance afterwards. You will bring him down yourself to the car."

"Jawohl, Herr Graf!" answered the man in green, and the lieutenant vanished through the door into the night.

A terrifying, an incredible suspicion that had overwhelmed me directly I stepped out of the car now came surging through my brain. That vast, black edifice, that slender tower at the corner—did I not know them?

Mechanically, I followed the man in green. My suspicions deepened with every step. In a little, they became certainty. Up a shallow and winding stair, along a long and broad corridor, hung with rich tapestries, the polished parquet glistening faintly in the dim light, through splendid suites of gilded apartments with old pictures and splendid furniture, I followed the lackey with powdered hair yawning on a landing, there a sentry in field-grey immobile before a door. I was in the Berlin Schloss.

The castle seemed to sleep. A hushed silence lay over all. Everywhere lights were dim, staircases wound down into emptiness, corridors stretched away into dusky solitude. Now and then an attendant in evening dress tiptoed past us or an officer vanished round a corner, noticeably save for a faint clink of spurs.

Thus we traversed, as it seemed to me, miles of silence and of twilight, and all the time my blood hammered at my temples and my throat grew dry as I thought of the ordeal that stood before me. To whom was I thus hidden, secretly, in the night?

(TO BE CONTINUED TOMORROW)

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